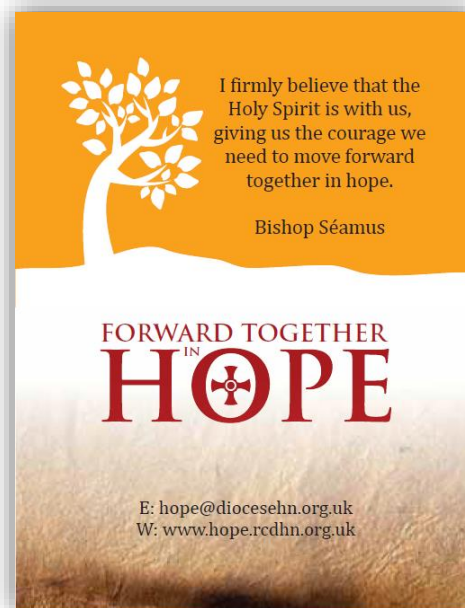
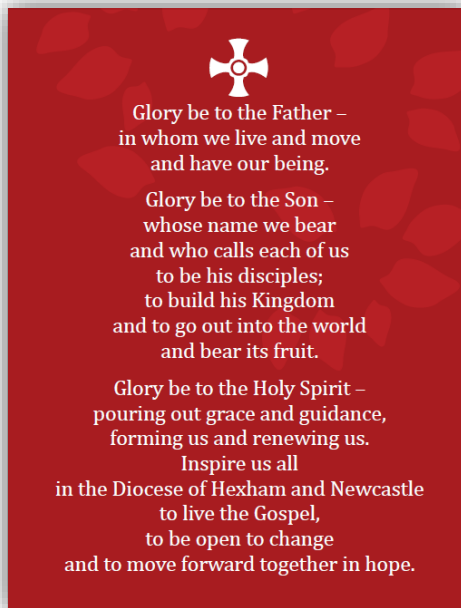


Forward Together in Hope Update: February 2015



The journey so far...

- A Diocesan Development Group, chaired by the Vicar General and with lay and clergy membership meets every two to three weeks to oversee the work of *Forward Together in Hope*.
- Bishop Seamus announces the plans for *Forward Together in Hope* at two public meetings on 16th July 2014. The text of the Bishop's input and other key resources are available [here](#)
- Fr Jim O'Keefe appointed as Diocesan Development Director and Tony Sacco appointed as Diocesan Development Officer.
- [Pastoral letter](#) and initial [leaflet](#) distributed across parishes in mid-November. Leaflet also made available for all school staff and governors.
- Meetings with the Council of Laity, Council of Priests and other key groups. Responses to questions posed by the Council of Laity can be found [here](#)
- Regular communications through the Diocesan website and the Northern Cross
- Interviews with:
 - [Premier Christian Radio](#)
 - [The Tablet](#)
- Inputs by Jim O'Keefe at weekend masses across the Diocese.
- Bishop Seamus calls the Diocese to prayer with two reflections in December in Newcastle and Hartlepool.
- *Forward Together in Hope* prayer cards issued widely throughout the Diocese.
- Nancy Gash appointed as Administrative Assistant.
- Lay representatives identified for each parish community to help in communicating *Forward Together in Hope* and engaging people in the process.
- In late January the Diocesan Board of Directors endorsed the work undertaken to date and provided some key principles for the next stages, see: [Bishop Seamus looks into the future](#)

What happens next?

Preparing the Way

- Work is underway to develop a resource pack for the 'Preparing the Way' part of the journey. This will consist of spirituality resources; detailed information about what *Forward Together in Hope* is seeking to achieve; statistical, financial and historical information about the Diocese; as well as an introduction to the forthcoming self-evaluation process. The pack will also include a DVD and electronic versions of all documents on a CD.
- The materials aim to assist parishes in getting ready to undertake a careful and prayerful self-evaluation from Pentecost onwards.
- The pack will be distributed through two meetings on 18th March (details to be finalised) where the Council of Priests and lay representatives will be introduced to the materials and given the opportunity to discuss these.
- Meetings are scheduled during March with the Council of Priests, Youth Council and Council of Laity to update them on progress and seek their ideas and involvement. Episcopal Vicars will also be meeting with clergy in their areas to consider *Forward Together in Hope*.

Exploring the Way

- Meetings will be arranged in each Deanery to provide more details of the forthcoming self-evaluation process.
- In May, parishes will each receive an individual data pack which will help to inform discussion and, ultimately, the completion of a detailed questionnaire. It is expected that the self-evaluation process will involve a large number of people from parishes and schools inputting their thoughts and ideas to the process.
- Questionnaires need to be completed by Advent 2015. After this a period of analysis, validation and dialogue with parishes will take place before recommendations are considered by a Diocesan-wide group of clergy and lay people ahead of decisions being made by Bishop Seamus.

Getting involved

Forward Together in Hope will require a lot of activity at local level. Please consider getting involved in this – speak with your lay contact or Parish Priest.

Also, the *Forward Together in Hope* team at the Diocese is on the look-out for skilled volunteers who can support and contribute to this work in various ways.

Finding out more

For the latest information about *Forward Together in Hope* and for access to the range of resources please access the Diocesan website – www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk

To contact one of the *Forward Together in Hope* team, e-mail: hope@diocesehn.org.uk or phone 0191 243 3304.